



DATE: December 21, 2004

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Thomas L. Gilevich, Senior Counsel – HMO Help Center

RE: MENTAL HEALTH PARITY –
DEPT. OF MENTAL HEALTH REPORT UNDER SB 1103

The Clinical Advisory Panel (CAP) of the California Department of Managed Health Care (Department) has scheduled a meeting in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health. Public input will be sought regarding the report required by the Department of Mental Health under Section 34 of SB 1103, regarding achieving mental health parity in California.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 5, 2005, from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., in the 2nd Floor Conference Room A and B, located in the US Bank Plaza Building, 980 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

The Department encourages the public and interested stakeholders to file written comments focusing on:

- (1) Any identified problems arising from the implementation of California's mental health parity legislation;
- (2) The commenter's meaning of "parity" regarding difficulties or failures in obtaining mental health services - such as differences in payments or charges for services, the types of services or benefits available or differences in access and availability of mental health services;
- (3) What areas of mental health services have worked better since the enactment of mental health parity laws and what areas have not improved or have not worked as well as expected;
- (4) What barriers are believed to exist in achieving parity and how advocates, regulators or legislation might address them?

Persons filing written comments with the Department on or before January 5, 2005, will be given priority to speak during the hearing. Written comments may be e-mailed to TGilevich@dmhc.ca.gov, faxed to (916) 229-3124; or mailed to the Department: Attention: Thomas L. Gilevich, Senior Counsel – HMO Help Center, Department of Managed Health Care, 980 Ninth Street, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814-2738. Written comments may also be submitted following the hearing.

As noted in the agenda, the CAP meeting will begin at 10 a.m. with public comments regarding mental health parity expected to begin before the lunch break. To allow time for all members of the public to speak, comments will be limited to the subject of the hearing and those wishing to speak will be asked to limit their comments to no more than five minutes in length.